

# Review: Abendau's Heir by Jo Zebedee: Review by Allen Stroud Stroud, A.

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## Review: Abendau's Heir

The first book in the Inheritance trilogy, *Abendau's Heir* is billed as a space opera. The opening certainly explores content that would fulfil this label, however, the majority of the story does not concern itself with the stuff you might associate with Star Wars or Star Trek.

Fleeing the wrath of their Empress mother, Karia and Kare are secreted aboard a ship with their father, the rebellious Ealyn at the controls. Both parents and children are powerful telepaths, with the latter only recently having discovered their powers. Ealyn's exile takes a tragic turn as a psychic accident renders him unstable. He makes it back to a secret rebel base, buddies refused sanctuary and instead, the children are to be split up and delivered into other custody. Ealyn agrees to transport them to their new families, but further tragedy leaves only Kare to grow up and oppose his mother.

Zebedee handles this opening with a deft hand. The writing is clear, crisp and consistent, with twists and turns that you do not expect. The decision to set up and sacrifice so much is a mark of the grand sweep of the work she has planned for the reader.

The second act of *Abendau's Heir* concerns itself with Kare's upbringing, at first with his surrogate family, and later focusing on his training with the rebels. It is this switch of gear that slows down the narrative and shifts the address towards more standard young adult fare. There are necessary elements of character progression and building going on in this part of the story. Kare establishes his relationships with many of his friends and foes during this segment and the payoff from the third act would not be anywhere near so poignant if this part were not present. That said, it is the weaker and slower section of the book.

Much of this and much of the third act veer into areas that would not be described as operatic. Instead, we have a more Military SF feel with descriptions of tactical engagements and operations, along with a variety of close quarter fighting.

The psychic and telepathic aspect of Zebedee's science fiction is carefully thought about. There are strengths and weaknesses to each of the gifted individuals who feature within the story. The manifestation of different powers is carefully handled, demonstrating the two-edged sword nature of these gifts, particularly when used to solve problems.

The conclusion of *Abendau's Heir* is devastating in its stark gritty delivery. Zebedee does dissemble in some of the scenes, but this is only to invoke your imagination. In this case, similar to Hitchcock, less is definitely more. If you were worried that Kare, and his companions would not suffer enough for their achievement, based on the lighter tone of the previous writing, then you will find your concerns dismantled.

*Abendau's Heir* is a good and gritty introduction to strong science fiction series from a thoughtful and intelligent writer. Readers will not be disappointed with Zebedee's story and there is much to look forward to in books two and three of the Inheritance Trilogy.